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DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

# United Nations conference on human settlements (Habitat II)

## Report of the Secretary-General

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# I. INTRODUCTION: THE STATE OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

## A. Legislative background

1. At its forty-sixth session, under the sub-item Human settlements of the item entitled "Development and international economic cooperation", the General Assembly considered a recommendation made by the Commission on Human Settlements in its resolution 13/2 of 8 May 1991, 1/ as endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 1991/311 of 26 July 1991, concerning the convening, possibly in 1997, of a United Nations conference on human settlements (Habitat II).

2. In its resolution 46/164 of 19 December 1991, on this question, the General Assembly, noting with concern that in many developing countries achievements in policies, programmes and projects at the national level in the field of human settlements had not been sufficient to arrest or reverse deterioration in the living conditions of people in both urban and rural areas, and being convinced that a worldwide conference with broad, multidisciplinary and high-level participation could provide a suitable forum for considering the current situation in the planning, development and management of human settlements in the context of prevailing and expected social, economic and environmental conditions, decided to consider at its forty-seventh session the question of convening, possibly in 1997, a United Nations conference on human settlements (Habitat II) with a view to taking a decision at that session on the objectives, content, scope and timing of such a conference and the modalities and financial implications of holding it. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), to prepare a report on the objectives, content and scope of such a conference, and to include a statement on the financial implications of the preparations for and convening of the conference, and to submit the report to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session.

3. The present report has been prepared pursuant to that resolution.

## B. Substantive background: the state of human settlements

4. Behind the call for the convening of a second United Nations conference on human settlements lies a simple fact, cited both by the Commission on Human Settlements in making the initial recommendation and by the General Assembly in expressing support for the idea. This fact is that, despite the enormous strides that have been made in the decade and a half since Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, which was held at Vancouver from 31 May to 11 June 1976, both in achieving greater theoretical understanding of the shelter problem and in actively improving shelter conditions on the ground for a large number of people, these achievements have not been enough to arrest, let alone reverse, the deterioration in the living conditions of a vast segment of the population in many countries. The evidence fully supports

this assessment. Indeed, a brief look at some of its aspects will illustrate both the seriousness and the complexity of the current human settlements situation, as well as the crisis that looms ahead unless urgent and concerted remedial action can be launched. Some factors that may be highlighted in this regard are set out below.

## 1. Urban growth and rising poverty

5. World demographics, particularly during the past two decades, have been dominated by two separate, though related, phenomena, namely, high population growth rates and rapid urbanization, both predominantly associated with the developing countries and both resulting in unprecedented levels of urban growth in those countries. Absolute world population increases have now reached the 1 billion mark per decade, the overwhelming share of this growth taking place in developing countries (88.3 per cent in 1970-1980; 91.7 per cent in 1980-1990, 94.1 per cent in 1990-2000 and 95.2 per cent in 2000-2010). Practically all of these population increases (about 90 per cent) will be absorbed by cities in the developing countries, which are already faced by enormous backlogs in the availability of shelter, infrastructure and services and confronted with increasingly overcrowded transportation systems, insufficient water supply, deteriorating sanitation and environmental pollution.

6. Recent estimates give a global figure of 1 billion people below the poverty line, with the absolute numbers of the poor increasing virtually everywhere, most dramatically in the developing regions. What is particularly striking is the increase in urban poverty. While the increase of the world's rural poor is estimated at 11 per cent over the period 1970-1985, the number of the urban poor has increased by 73 per cent over the same period. In perhaps a quarter of all developing countries, the poor in urban areas now outnumber the poor in rural areas. Already in 1988 it was estimated that about a quarter of the urban population in developing countries lived in absolute poverty: some 300 million people had incomes inadequate to fulfil even basic nutritional and housing requirements.

7. One effect of this "urbanization of poverty" has been to accentuate demand for shelter, infrastructure and services of a quality far higher than that which would have been considered acceptable in rural areas, putting satisfaction of such demand so much further beyond the resources of the urban poor themselves and of concerned municipal and metropolitan authorities. Moreover, this shift of concentration of poverty from the generally more quiescent rural areas to the more articulate and politicized urban settlements has important ramifications for the political and social stability of the affected countries. Recent urban riots experienced by a number of cities in various parts of the world underline the potential dangers posed by urban poverty.

8. In the meantime, increasing landlessness and unemployment, declining income yields from agriculture, lack of access to modern amenities such as

potable water and electricity and growing scarcity of affordable and appropriate local building materials and of adequate sources of energy for domestic use create equally dramatic situations for the rural poor.

### 2. Deteriorating physical living conditions

9. During the last two decades in particular, the world has witnessed a rapid deterioration of physical living conditions for an increasing number of households, typified by the growth of slums and squatter settlements in urban areas. Today, the majority of people in most cities of the developing world have to survive in settlements characterized by inadequate and unhealthy shelter conditions - poor ventilation and sometimes exposure to the elements, lack of clean water, and absence of sewerage systems, garbage collection and environmentally safe sanitation. It is estimated, for example, that an average of one third of the urban population of the developing countries lives in slums or squatter settlements, the figures being considerably higher for particular cities, such as Alexandria (70 per cent), Delhi (60 per cent) and Mexico City (60 per cent). While it is already estimated that at least 600 million people in the urban centres of the developing countries live in life-and-health-threatening situations, another 250 million people worldwide may be expected to move to cities during the decade, to live in unsafe housing in slums and shanty towns. Moreover, the widespread lack of community services such as educational and health facilities in poor urban and rural settlements severely affects the quality of life of most families, and contributes in a fundamental respect to their limited ability to participate in the economic and social development of their countries.

10. One remarkable aspect of this situation to which attention may be called is the element of self-help it has spawned. In the absence of effective housing strategies addressing the scale of the problem, the poor continue to provide as best they can for their own shelter needs, with decreasing hopes for direct support from Governments, whose role in facilitating the provision of adequate and affordable shelter and services is being progressively eroded by growing economic and financial constraints. The result of this, according to the estimates of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, is that about 9 out of every 10 new shelter units in the developing countries are currently built by the informal sector, with only rudimentary infrastructure facilities, the inhabitants being often under permanent threat of eviction.

### 3. Inadequate environmental infrastructure and its health consequences

11. Environmental infrastructure and services that provide safe drinking water, sewerage and sanitation are prime requirements for human health and dignity. Yet, approximately 55 per cent of rural populations and 40 per cent of urban populations currently lack access to adequate supplies of drinking water. The proportion of people with adequate access to sanitation services is even lower. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that, in 1990,

about 250 million urban residents lacked access to safe water and nearly 400 million were without proper sanitation facilities. Despite intensified efforts during the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (1981-1990), the provision of improved sanitation failed to keep up with rising urban populations, leaving an additional 85 million people without access to safe water and sanitation. The actual situation is, in reality, probably worse, as many of those included in the serviced category have, in fact, to depend on poor and unreliable water supply and sanitation services. A case in point is the city of Bombay, where two thirds of the population receive water for only four hours per day or less and only 4 per cent of residents have water for more than eight hours per day.

12. The situation is no better with regard to the management of solid wastes. In many cities of the developing world the solid waste collected is less than 40 per cent of that being generated, and this situation is getting worse: the percentage of solid wastes collected in Dar es Salaam, for example, has declined from 14 per cent in 1988 to 5 per cent in 1992. All of this underlines the fact that current investment levels and approaches to the provision of environmental infrastructure are far from adequate. The current level of investment in the water supply and sanitation sector in developing countries, for example, is about $10 billion per year, whereas it is estimated that a fivefold increase over this level of investment would be needed in order to reach full coverage by the year 2000.

13. The consequences of this situation for human health can, without exaggeration, be described as both tragic and appalling. It is estimated that 75 per cent of the 49 million people who die each year succumb to diseases that can be traced to their immediate living environment. Today, about 2.5 billion people suffer from ailments of some sort related to contaminated water and the lack of sanitation. In the developing countries, 44 per cent of all causes of death can be traced to infectious and parasitic diseases. Among these, diarrhoea, tuberculosis and acute respiratory diseases are all related to problems of underdevelopment and poor environmental health conditions in urban and rural settlements. Urban areas in the developing countries, in particular, have in recent years experienced a rapid increase in the incidence of malaria, schistosomiasis, dengue fever, Chagas' disease and cholera, all related to deteriorating living conditions in overcrowded and under-served settlements.

## 4. Household energy crisis

14. Virtually half of the world's population relies exclusively on non-commercial energy sources such as fuelwood, agricultural residues or animal dung for their domestic energy supply. Over 200 million people in 22 countries, including 16 in Africa, cannot meet their minimum need, even by overcutting remaining forests. The unregulated exploitation of forests and the use of organic wastes as domestic fuel for the satisfaction of daily household energy needs lead not only to environmental degradation - deforestation, soil erosion and desertification - but also to health problems

for the poor: in the case of excessive fuelwood removal, the result is loss of nutrients and valuable fodder; in the case of burning of dung and agricultural residues, damage to health, in addition to loss of nutrients that could be used in agriculture. Fuel shortages are moreover driving villagers in numerous developing countries to shift to uncooked foods of low nutritional value, while in urban areas many low-income residents, forced to rely on firewood and charcoal, have seen prices quadruple over the last 10 years.

## 5. Deteriorating urban transport services

15. In most developing countries, deteriorating public transport services in urban areas and their rising costs have had serious adverse consequences for the urban poor, particularly by reducing their employment and income-earning opportunities, in some cases by as much as 30 per cent. Their mobility has in effect been largely confined to destinations reachable by walking and non-motorized transport, which are the modes that account for almost half of all trips being made. In addition, it has become common for many low-income urban dwellers to spend up to four hours a day in travel, as a consequence of longer travel distances and traffic congestion. Furthermore, from an environmental perspective, the increasing dependence, for urban transport, on motor vehicles in individual use makes transport the main source of air pollution in urban areas. Transport-related pollution is responsible for up to 20 per cent of current greenhouse-gas emissions, which threaten global warming.

## 6. The ecological dimension

16. It is important to recognize that deteriorating living conditions such as those described above are both a symptom and a cause of environmental degradation. The absence of waste disposal and sanitation facilities, for example, is not just a health risk to the poor, it is also a cause of ecological damage, as human and other wastes pollute groundwater and streams, for lack of any other alternative. Similarly, overcutting of forest trees for firewood can lead to loss of forest cover and desertification. Rapid urbanization and growth of mega-cities particularly have created immense and growing problems of air and water pollution, land degradation, traffic congestion and noise pollution. Thus, about 1.3 billion people, mostly in developing countries, live in urban areas that do not meet World Health Organization standards for airborne dust and smoke, while about 1 billion live in cities that exceed WHO standards for sulphur dioxide. Risks, from hazardous wastes, even if local, are acute. In some large cities, the daily outpouring of industrial wastes into water bodies reaches millions of cubic meters. In some countries, as little as 2 per cent of sewage is treated. From 30 to 50 per cent of urban solid waste is left uncollected. The implications of all the above for the globe's shrinking supply of freshwater, the health of urban residents, and the integrity of the globe's atmosphere are obvious.

## 7. Effect on vulnerable groups

17. Finally, one serious aspect of the current shelter crisis that deserves to be highlighted is the unequal burden which it places on the more vulnerable groups, such as women and children. Not only, from the health point of view, are young children more susceptible to diseases related to insanitary living conditions but, from the social point of view, their plight as homeless and so-called street children, particularly in some of the major cities of Latin America, has become a matter of rising international concern approaching a scandal.

18. It is estimated that globally one third of households are de facto headed by women. Evidence suggests that urban households headed by women are likely to be poorer than those headed by men, and that women from those households have to engage in various economic survival strategies in order to combine their responsibilities for income generation and motherhood. Women, by and large, still labour under significant disabilities with regard to access to shelter. Even where they have legal rights to land and property, customs and discriminatory practices may often prevent them from exercising those rights. Particularly affected in this regard are single women with children, and abandoned wives.

19. In the developing countries, shelter is one of the sectors where women play a key role, assuming, in some rural communities, primary responsibility for home construction, decoration and repair. However, because of lack of access to modern or appropriate technology, materials and training, women largely rely on traditional building methods and materials that are often of low quality and are also becoming increasingly scarce. These materials include thatch, mud, wattle and timber, which are usually acquired from common land. The transition to conventional land-ownership patterns is gradually eliminating access to such materials, however, and the result is that women have to spend more time and labour in search of new sources and alternative materials and, in many instances, are forced to pay for materials that used to be freely acquired. There is need, therefore, to address these issues in the context of the promotion of sustainable human settlements development.

## 8. Other contributory factors

20. Compounding these problems of human settlements, moreover, are developments in other sectors that have helped to undermine prospects for improved living conditions in many countries. One such factor, of sometimes extreme consequence for development activities in general and human settlements activities in particular, is external indebtedness and its usually prescribed remedy of structural adjustment. With the worsening of the international economic situation in the 1980s, a number of countries adopted structural adjustment programmes intended to strengthen their competitive position in global trade and eliminate constraints to the productivity of their national economies. Whatever success these programmes may have had in paying off external debts and reducing balance-of-payments deficits, they are

now recognized to have been not without significant social costs; and the poor have borne the brunt of their negative impacts on living conditions and human development programmes.

21. The production of housing and the delivery of basic infrastructure, both essential to any programme of sustainable development, have suffered particularly badly, especially in low-income communities. Part of the reason for this is the persistence in many quarters of the unfortunate, and certainly mistaken, idea that human settlements are a "social welfare" rather than a "productive" sector, which should therefore be given low priority, especially in an economic downturn. This is despite the fact that a report prepared by the former Department of International Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, in collaboration with the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) 2/ clearly demonstrated that housing improvement and construction activities have the potential to reconcile seemingly conflicting economic and social priorities by simultaneously supporting domestic-based development efforts and the satisfaction of fundamental social needs.

22. The impacts of structural adjustment programmes on human settlements have been negative because conventional econometric models have failed to measure correctly the economic returns on human settlements investments. An international policy review of the cost/benefit implications of human settlements investments and the formulation of new investment guidelines that reflect socio-economic realities in a context of sustainable development could be the basis of a reorientation of investment priorities to the benefit of most developing countries, both economically and socially. Such a review could be an important programme element for a second Habitat Conference.

23. All of the foregoing factors, as the General Assembly concluded in its resolution 46/164, make it clear that there is a need for an in-depth review and assessment of the strategies that have been put in place, particularly since, as the Assembly also noted, proper planning, development and management of human settlements would lead to economic and social progress and thereby alleviate poverty and promote development that is environmentally sound and sustainable in the long run. Carrying out such a review, it was further suggested by the General Assembly, should be one of the tasks to be undertaken by the proposed conference.

## II. MEETING THE HUMAN SETTLEMENTS CHALLENGE: THE EXPERIENCE SINCE HABITAT: UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

### A. Introduction

24. It is recalled that in 1976, in response to growing international concern about the state of human settlements, the United Nations convened its first major conference devoted specifically to this subject, namely, Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, which was held at Vancouver, Canada, from 31 May to 11 June 1976. An overview of that Conference and of developments and trends since then will, it is believed, provide a useful contextual background to the issue now under consideration, as well as throw additional light on the substantive rationale for the convening of Habitat II, as reflected in the relevant resolutions of both the Commission on Human Settlements and the General Assembly.

### B. Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements and its aftermath

25. The agenda of the Vancouver Conference was twofold: first, to discuss and adopt a plan of action for the international community and for Governments for the effective promotion of human settlements development, particularly in the developing countries; and, second, to decide on the appropriate institutional arrangements for international cooperation in the field of human settlements.

26. The Vancouver Conference adopted a Declaration of Principles and 64 recommendations for national action grouped under six major areas: settlement policies and strategies; settlement planning; shelter, infrastructure and services; land; public participation; and institutions and management. 3/ Under these headings, individual recommendations covered a broad range of issues designed to respond to the human settlements concerns and priorities identified at that time.

27. The institutional arrangements adopted on the recommendation of the Conference resulted in the establishment, at the intergovernmental level, of the Commission on Human Settlements and, at the Secretariat level, of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), incorporating various existing Secretariat units, most notably, the Centre for Housing, Building and Planning of the then Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation, and the United Nations Audio-Visual Information Centre, located at Vancouver (see General Assembly resolution 32/162 of 19 December 1977).

28. As was noted by the General Assembly in resolution 46/164, considerable progress has been made in the human settlements field since the establishment of the Commission on Human Settlements and the Centre, resulting in substantial advances by Governments in improving the living conditions of a

large number of their people. Within the United Nations itself, the human settlements programme has shown considerable gain since its establishment in 1978. To date, for example, the Centre alone has produced and disseminated more than 250 technical publications covering all aspects of the Vancouver Conference recommendations, as well as many new areas of concern emerging since then. Equally, the number of technical cooperation projects executed by the Centre has grown steadily, with 271 technical cooperation projects currently under execution in more than 100 countries. The programme has also been able, within the constraints of its resources, to anticipate and encompass concerns, priorities, and opportunities for action which have emerged since that Conference, including such issues as urbanization policies and urban management, the role of women, community participation and support of local initiatives, capacity-building, innovative financing mechanisms for shelter, infrastructure and services, human settlements and environmentally sustainable development, and the development of performance indicators for the shelter sector.

29. The coordination of human settlements-related activities within the United Nations system likewise has registered significant developments since Vancouver. The Centre's cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) continues to be close and substantive, focusing on the need to make settlements planning and management environmentally sound. Joint activities with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have developed far beyond the execution of the technical cooperation projects envisaged in resolution 32/162. The Centre has become an active partner in new UNDP initiatives to support action at the local and community levels, and is now the main executing agency of the Urban Management Programme, a joint undertaking of UNDP, the World Bank and the Centre.

30. Collaboration has also been established on a permanent basis with relevant Secretariat units, most notably the economic commissions, the Population Division and the Statistical Office of the Department for Economic and Social Development and the World Food Programme, with specialized agencies such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), WHO and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and with financial institutions such as the World Bank and the regional development banks. The Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), after extensive review of coordination in the field of human settlements within the United Nations system as a whole, has welcomed the increased effectiveness of the United Nations system in dealing with human settlements issues as a result of the strengthened role of the Centre as the principal coordinating agency in this field.

31. The Commission on Human Settlements has likewise achieved notable success in line with the objectives set out in General Assembly resolution 32/162. The Commission, which has earned a reputation as a pragmatic and action-oriented technical body, has, as the Assembly noted in resolution 46/164, succeeded, together with the Centre, in placing human settlements higher on the agenda for national action and international cooperation and in promoting increased understanding of the links between people, settlements,

environment and development. It has also played a leading role in identifying new global perspectives for human settlements development, as exemplified by its forward-looking deliberations on the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, which translated into an operational tool for national strategic action the pioneering concept of an "enabling approach" to the development process; and its elaboration of guidelines on sustainable human settlements development as a contribution to the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which was held at Rio de Janeiro from 3 to 14 June 1992.

## C. Evolving ideas in human settlements development

32. As may have been surmised from the foregoing, progress in human settlements action on the ground since the Vancouver Conference has been accompanied by an evolution in thinking with respect to the problems of human settlements development and their solutions. Important landmarks on the road to that evolution are set out below.

### 1. Global Report on Human Settlements

33. In order to enable Governments to update information on human settlements conditions and trends, and to facilitate a review of their policies and make them relevant to changing needs, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements published in 1986, 10 years after the Vancouver Conference, a Global Report on Human Settlements. 4/ That report was intended not only to provide the needed new data on human settlements but also to articulate new approaches in the human settlements sector. A primary new approach identified in the global report was that Governments should shift to an "enabling strategy" in their human settlements development efforts, in contrast to the prevailing supply approach. The main objective of such a strategy would be to make conditions for self-help and mutual aid as favourable as possible, through sets of enabling actions in support of locally determined, self-organized and self-managed settlements programmes.

### 2. A new agenda for human settlements

34. On the basis of the ideas set out in the global report, the Centre then produced a draft policy statement, entitled "A new agenda for human settlements". 5/ This statement extracted the important points of the global report and reformulated them into a set of proposals for making human settlements management the framework for development decision-making at the national level. On the basis of the ideas contained in this statement, and at the direction of the Commission on Human Settlements, as endorsed by CPC, the human settlements programme was revised, so as to contain the following eight programme areas: global issues and strategies; national policies and instruments; integrated settlements management; financial resources; land management; infrastructure development and operation; housing production; and the construction sector.

### 3. Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000

35. The new agenda for human settlements led directly to the formulation of a new global initiative for shelter, the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, 6/ adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 43/181 of 20 December 1988 as the basis for tackling the housing crisis, especially in developing countries, up to the end of the century. The Strategy, built on the enabling approach developed in the global report, emphasizes the need for maximum collaboration between the public and the private and community sectors in both the formulation and implementation of national shelter strategies, and stresses the requirement for participation and full commitment from all levels of Government, central, municipal and local.

### 4. United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

36. As recommended by the Commission on Human Settlements, and with the support of many Governments and concerned organizations and groups, the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in its decision 3/3, decided that human settlements should be treated as a distinct programme of Agenda 21; that its programme areas should address human settlements as a substantive framework for sustainable development; and that programme areas such as atmosphere, land, coastal areas, freshwater and waste management should include the human settlements dimension. 7/

37. As a follow-up to this, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements collaborated closely with the secretariat of the Conference in the preparation of relevant draft chapters of Agenda 21, covering such areas as water resource management, sanitation and waste management, in addition to overall promotion of sustainable human settlements development. Separately, the Centre published two significant documents, on the linkages between human settlements and sustainable development, and between human settlements development and natural resource use, together with a number of option papers on such diverse issues as energy use, transportation policy and waste management. All of the aforementioned material, which explores the linkages between human settlements management and sustainable development in the global, national and local contexts, would provide a useful basis for further extended work on a sustainable human settlements development strategy for the next century, such as the proposed conference might be expected to undertake.

38. The significance in this context of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro from 3-14 June 1992, is that it has, inter alia:

(a) Reconfirmed the importance of human settlements as the physical framework for sustainable development, a proper management of which is a prerequisite to the attainment of overall sustainable development goals. Virtually everybody lives in a human settlement of some kind, and virtually all of life's activities take place there, including, indeed, implementation

of the agreements and commitments made at the Rio Conference. Consequently, the conditions of human settlements, how they are managed and how well they function cannot be a matter of indifference in the pursuit of sustainable development;

(b) Highlighted, as a corollary to the preceding point, the importance of taking environmental sustainability fully into account in the human settlements development process. Since most of life's activities take place within human settlements, it is in, or in relation to, human settlements that most of the earth's natural resources are consumed or transformed into products and services to sustain the human lifestyle. Equally, it is in, or in relation to, human settlements that most of the pollution directly threatening the natural environment is generated. All of this points to the close interconnection between human settlements development and management and the sustainable development process, not only in social and economic terms but also, especially, in environmental terms. This is a factor that can be expected to assume increasing importance as the process of urbanization continues apace towards the situation where, shortly after the turn of the century, most people will be living in urban settlements. The fact that the environment of the world will soon be an urban one is clearly, therefore, a pivotal fact on which policies will have to be based;

(c) Stressed the need to follow through, in a specific human settlements context, the many important human settlements related issues brought out by the Rio Conference. While such issues as transportation, urban water supply and waste management have been appropriately highlighted by the Conference, effective action and follow-up on these, together with others such as shelter, infrastructure, building materials and construction technology, are best undertaken in the overall context of integrated human settlements development, such as Habitat II would be in a position to decide on. Habitat II would thus in effect carry forward the work in this area begun by the Rio Conference, making the theme of sustainable development and the world's urban future the centre-piece of its deliberations.

## III. OBJECTIVES, SCOPE AND CONTENT OF A SECOND UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

### A. Emerging issues for a global human settlements agenda

39. It would be instructive, as a necessary background to a discussion of the specific objectives, scope and content of a second United Nations conference on human settlements to examine in broad outline some of the major issues that have emerged in the human settlements field in the decade and a half since the Vancouver Conference, which can be expected to condition, if not determine, the work of the second conference.

## 1. The theoretical setting

40. The recommendations of the Vancouver Conference were based on a certain perception of the world situation at the time and on an understanding of human settlements based on then current knowledge. Those recommendations were conceived at a time when the generally accepted development model was based on an assumption of governmental initiative in all the leading sectors, with a limited role for the private sector, non-governmental organizations, the population at large and even local authorities. This view has drastically changed and it is now internationally accepted that the role of Government should be to promote private sector initiative and to foster participatory involvement by communities and non-governmental organizations. Knowledge of human settlements functions and needs has undergone a major evolution, as highlighted by the Rio Conference and developments in other sectors of relevance to human settlements. This deepened and broadened knowledge base for dealing with changes provides the opportunity for a review of policies and strategies, based on lessons learned over nearly two decades.

## 2. The global setting

41. The recommendations of the Vancouver Conference were largely directed at the needs and circumstances of developing countries. It was taken for granted that developed countries, with ample financial resources and enormous institutional capacities, could meet all their human settlements needs in the normal course of events. Human settlements in developed and developing countries were seen as being different in kind and not merely in degree.

42. It is now obvious that the problems of human settlements are global in scope. Not only can no country claim to have fully met its human settlements needs, but it appears to be the case that many settlements in developed countries are deteriorating, in terms of both functional efficiency and quality of life, for segments of the urban population, particularly those living in inner cities or in degraded peripheral urban areas, or those who are literally homeless. Thus while it is true that the problem of homelessness and inadequate shelter has been most manifest in the developing countries, especially those with a burgeoning urban population, it is by no means so confined, and is, in fact, a problem of increasing concern to cities of many an industrialized country. Furthermore, countries undertaking a transition to market economies are faced with the combined challenge of a weak institutional base and an escalating demand for better housing and services and improved environmental quality. On the other hand, developing countries do not only have problems to show; many of their cities have shown an ability to invent and put into practice imaginative solutions and to forge new partnerships with the non-governmental sector. This means that human settlements are now being seen from a new viewpoint and that the possibility exists of parallel lessons being learned by both developed and developing countries. Differences in human settlements, it now turns out, are only matters of degree, and commonalties now appear to be much greater than they did in 1976. This means that, more than ever before, a new human settlements

programme to be adopted can and should be a truly global programme, of relevance to developed and developing countries alike.

### 3. Governmental and non-governmental roles

43. The recommendations of the Vancouver Conference were almost entirely couched in terms of leading actions by Governments in the human settlements sector. Experience since 1976 has demonstrated that total reliance on governmental initiatives has not been successful. In most developing countries, human settlements have survived only through the dynamism of the private sector (formal and informal) and of the community sector, which, as noted earlier, has stepped in to meet basic needs and make up for public sector inadequacies. What has been done may, perhaps, not always have been done well, but, without such intervention, it would not have been done at all. What is still not clear, however, and remains to be explored, possibly at Habitat II, is how the private sector is to be mobilized or what specific roles different subsectors of the private sector can or should play in human settlements programmes.

### 4. Mobilization of financial resources

44. One idea emerging in this area is the need to explore more creative possibilities of resource mobilization for human settlements development, perhaps through the capital market. National and international financial markets have in this context to be seen as an integrated system in which the human settlements submarket will need to establish a position. Submarkets for the public and private sectors, for profit-making and non-profit-making development and for long-term and short-term investments will have to be mapped out, and a suitable strategy developed for each. The means by which this can be done will require thorough investigation in both developed and developing countries, but success in this effort will be significant in opening a new resource window for human settlements development.

### 5. Capacity-building and human resource development

45. Heightened appreciation of the critical importance of the existence of strong local institutions and the requisite managerial and technical skills to the success of development efforts has led in recent times to emphasis on these issues of a kind and at a level never before attempted. In the context particularly of an enabling approach, the absence in many developing countries of trained personnel at all levels capable of supporting an enabling approach strategy constitutes a major obstacle to human settlements development. A policy review of the training situation in the developing countries is unquestionably called for, to give correct direction to training efforts.

46. However, better-trained personnel is only one aspect of the enabling environment that needs to be established: human resource development and

institution capacity-building must form part of a coherent and comprehensive strategy. In addition to the improvement of individual technical skills in resource planning and management, it is essential to assist national and local institutions in setting up and implementing enabling policies based, inter alia, on the streamlining of rules and regulations, the collection and exchange of information, the monitoring of established goals, the application of modern management methods and procedures, and the capacity to develop and sustain technological innovation.

## 6. Sustainable development

47. The publication of the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development 8/ and, more particularly, the Rio Conference, have brought the issue of sustainability to the forefront of development thinking. In addition to increased attention being given to measures needed to prevent environmental pollution, concern has also emerged for the improvement of the day-to-day living and working environment of people. The harmonization of these two goals is one of the main tasks of sustainable human settlements management.

48. Human settlements, particularly cities, consume large quantities of raw materials and energy, and their efficiency in the use of these inputs is not what it should be. Furthermore, human settlements have not always been prudent in disposing of waste products, and this has led to mounting problems. Ideally, settlements should be managed so that the waste (by-product) from one process becomes the raw material for another process, so that the final waste, at the end of the consumption or production chain, can be recycled or reused. The technologies are available and Habitat II should assist in promoting the development of a system that would recognize the need for human settlements to be planned and built in accordance with criteria for sustainable resource use and reuse. What is needed, in short, is innovative design of human settlements, so that they can function in a healthy, resource-prudent and efficient manner for the benefit of their residents, at which point, presumably, most current environmental concerns will ipso facto be taken care of.

## 7. New technologies

49. Technologies are changing more rapidly now than at any time in previous human history, and many new technologies will have a profound impact on the functioning and the physical patterns of settlements. Settlements in developed countries, established on the basis of older technologies, will have to make adjustments in their operations, their infrastructure networks and their building forms. Settlements in developing countries, if they foresee the coming changes, can leap-frog over the twentieth century and begin to plan and operate on the basis of twenty-first-century technology. The implications of all these changes need to be explored, however, in order to set a clear future direction for settlements management.

## 8. Communications

50. Existing forms of electronic communication - telephones, facsimiles, electronic mail etc. and forms soon to come, such as videophones - allow people to communicate around the world and across national territories as easily as they once exchanged information within offices. This means that centralized locations are no longer important for a wide range of organizations with large-scale communication needs. These organizations can be located in any place that has accommodation for the workforce and reliable power and communication connections.

51. Similarly, individuals who operate small enterprises, other than direct retailing or similar businesses, have become "liberated" and no longer need rely on being physically at the centre of a market catchment. Already, some decentralization of independent workers is taking place in developed countries with sophisticated communications systems, and this trend could strengthen and spread. On the other hand, improved communications might mean that large centralized organizations will be able to reach out and compete in peripheral markets not previously accessible, thus generating a trend towards concentration rather than deconcentration.

52. All of these possibilities and their implications need to be explored. Their impacts on the forms of human settlements could be very significant, but these impacts will differ in intensity and occur over varying periods of time, depending on a country's economic situation, geographical characteristics, technical capacities and development policies.

## 9. Transportation

53. Every country in the world, particulaly the developed countries, has seen a revolution in the movement of goods and people with the spread of road transport. The flexibility, convenience and reliability of road transport have made it the dominant mode virtually everywhere both between cities and within cities. However, the benefits have been accompanied by costs, particularly with regard to intra-urban transport. Cities have had to be reshaped at enormous cost to meet movement requirements of vehicles and most still do not and cannot function efficiently. The concentration of air pollution caused by emissions is creating increasingly severe problems for urban populations, the poor being particularly exposed to the risk of permanent health damage.

54. One reason for this is that settlements have not been properly designed to minimize transportation movements, as a result of which unnecessary travel adds to traffic congestion and to atmospheric pollution. Settlements can still be adapted and, in the case of the new ones, designed to encourage pedestrian circulation and to make other simple forms of movement comfortable and efficient, and road systems can be designed so that traffic flows smoothly, saving energy and reducing accident risks, noise and pollution. Expanded research efforts are needed to identify which factors are critical in

achieving technical efficiency and user acceptance, so that they can form the basis of sound intra-urban transportation policies. In addition, simple, efficient and convenient public transport solutions, such as trams and light-rail surface mass-transit systems, once eclipsed by motorized transport, deserve to be re-examined in the light of new energy-saving and pollution abatement policies.

55. Attention should also be paid to the promotion of environment-friendly technologies in the transportation sector, particularly for individual transport vehicles. An array of experiments is being carried out on new fuels, new propulsion systems and new protective devices, but no overall assessment has yet been made of their potential influence on settlements design. Just as the petrol-engined automobile created the exurban sprawl of communities in the developed countries, new vehicles could influence development patterns in new ways which must be examined.

## 10. Water resources

56. Over the past quarter of a century, urban growth and industrialization have been the driving forces of national and economic growth throughout the developing world. This scale and pattern of growth have lately, however, been confronted with the realities of finite resources. The limits to the availability of one such resource, namely, water, specifically freshwater, are only beginning to dawn on society. Domestic and industrial consumers have been demanding a progressively greater share of finite water resources: at the same time waste generated by their activities has been polluting freshwater sources and creating severe health risks. It is now evident that sound urban water resources management is a key to sustainable urban and human development. Efficient and equitable allocation of urban water resources is needed to facilitate food security, health improvement, environmental protection and economic growth. In order to protect urban water resources from degradation and depletion, as part of an overall strategy to protect health and the environment, water will have to be considered as an economic commodity and priced accordingly, taking into account the principle that the polluter pays. In addition, improved recycling techniques for households and industries and improved groundwater treatment and protection methods will be required to abate pollution.

## 11. Waste management

57. In many cities of developed countries, waste management is already among the most critical problems faced by municipal administrations. If present trends continue, developing countries will soon be in the situation in which developed countries already are, while developed countries will be facing an almost overwhelming task in disposing of personal, household and commercial or industrial wastes. In a sense, the concept of waste disposal diverts attention from the real objective noted above, namely, by-product reuse or recycling. Anything left over at the end of the consumption or production

process should ideally be used as input to new production cycles or converted into other forms for reuse.

## 12. Energy

58. Energy issues remain of critical importance in any consideration of emerging issues for a global human settlements agenda and cannot safely be ignored in any conception of sustainable human settlements development. Attention to new and renewable energy technologies rose significantly in the early 1970s, in response to sharp increases in the costs of conventional energy sources. However, interest waned with subsequent price adjustments. It is estimated that, if current trends hold, only about 10 per cent of commercial power will be generated by new energy sources at the end of the century.

59. As the Rio Conference has recently reconfirmed, there are enormous potentials for energy conservation, particularly in the developed countries, which should be explored: by some estimates, the developed countries have no foreseeable need to increase total energy consumption because all improvements in settlement conditions can be accommodated by energy economies. In the developing countries, demand is bound to increase to meet production needs and quality-of-life improvements, and there is no significant opportunity for conservation because of the relatively low consumption levels now recorded. The main potential for new energy technologies is, therefore, probably in the developing countries.

60. It is very likely that new forms of energy will suggest new forms of human settlements. If new technologies work best on a small scale, that implies that a spread of small settlements will be more efficient than concentration in one large settlement. If they work best only in certain locations, the national pattern of human settlements might be influenced by the distribution of those locations. A full analysis of all the implications is required, so that they can be matched with other factors.

## 13. Information

61. Perhaps the greatest technological breakthrough of the past decade has been in information storage, retrieval and manipulation. Settlements managers can now have access to timely and accurate data for decision-making. Records of land interests (titles, transactions, boundaries etc.), records of infrastructure networks (water mains, sewer lines, telephone conduits etc.), records of financial transactions (property rates, mortgage portfolios, capital budgets etc.) and many other records can be readily available for planning purposes. Demographic data can be analysed at a fine level of detail for community characteristics, when neighbourhood developments are being considered.

62. Information-processing possibilities are limitless, but the resources available for information processing are not. Priorities must be set for the most valuable information to be collected and for the uses of that information to be clearly identified. Furthermore, the method of updating information is just as important as the method of first collecting it, and questions of custody and access have to be determined, if a system is to work properly. Policy guidelines on all these matters are required, so that the information framework can be nationally and internationally compatible, giving all participants access to a global data network. In the area of human settlements, particularly with regard to the needs of the developing countries, what is often more relevant - and of vital importance to countries that can ill afford to waste scarce resources - is access to reliable information on what different information technology devices and applications can do under given circumstances to achieve certain objectives. Habitat II could provide a useful forum for an exposition of these matters.

## B. Objectives of the conference

63. The proposed conference would address two kinds of objectives, long-term and immediate. The long-term objective would be to arrest the deterioration of global human settlements conditions and ultimately facilitate the achievement of improved settlement conditions for all, with special attention to the role and the demands of those social groups whose quality of life and contribution to development is hampered by exclusion and inequality, namely, the poor in general and women.

64. The immediate objective of the conference would be to formulate a global plan of action capable of guiding national and international efforts through the first two decades of the next century. This plan of action should include:

(a) A statement of principles and commitments by Governments;

(a) A set of rolling programmes and subprogrammes, with realistic targets and timetables, and provisions for monitoring and evaluation of performance;

(c) Indication of financial requirements, including ways and means to mobilize the necessary new and additional financial resources;

(d) Measures for the reorganization and strengthening of national, metropolitan and municipal institutions and machinery to enhance human settlements development and operations capabilities, with special attention to the situation in the developing countries;

(e) Recommendations on how the existing institutional arrangements for international cooperation and coordination can be strengthened.

## C. Scope of the conference

65. All the emerging issues discussed in section A above (paras. 39-62) are, as will have appeared, germane to the subject of sustainable human settlements development, and as such will fall within the scope of Habitat II. The cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary nature of human settlements thus offers a unique framework for addressing many of the socio-economic problems that have emerged or have intensified during the troubled decade of the 1980s, namely, stagnant or receding economic growth, poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation and so forth. It is in human settlements that people live and work, and it is in human settlements that the answers must be found to improve living environments, to help the poor and disadvantaged meet their basic needs and achieve dignity and to build the basis for sustainable social and economic development.

66. Population growth and distribution patterns are closely linked to the nature and scale of settlements in which people live and to the opportunities they offer; infant mortality, morbidity and life expectancy are very much connected to the quality of housing, water supply and physical infrastructure; employment and income-generation opportunities are lost by the inability to exploit the skills and human resources available to improve human settlements, and thus generate opportunities for economic growth; and environmental degradation is often the result of poor settlements management and a lack of access by the poor to gainful economic activities that only human settlements can provide.

67. The lessons of the 15 years since the Vancouver Conference show that settlements development cannot be the result simply of global plans of action or of top-down government policy. The conference goal will be achieved only if it takes into account the multifaceted aspects of human settlements development and solicits the views of the protagonists and real stakeholders in settlements development, namely, people and the governmental and non-governmental structures most directly concerned with their daily lives (local authorities, community and neighbourhood organizations, academic institutions and professional associations, citizens' and voluntary groups, business organizations and the organized private sector). It is to the viewpoints of these groups that the conference will have to give maximum attention if it is to formulate policies that are sustainable in terms of acceptability, applicability and resource mobilization. It would be necessary, therefore, to develop appropriate arrangements to encourage and facilitate the widest possible range of input to the conference, in terms of experience, ideas and proposals.

## D. The conference agenda

68. The conference agenda should be so framed, taking into account the issues explored in the present report, as to enable the conference to undertake the tasks which the General Assembly proposed for it in resolution 46/164, namely, (a) to review trends in policies and programmes undertaken by countries and

international organizations to implement the recommendations adopted by Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements; (b) to conduct a mid-term review of the implementation of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 and, if necessary, make recommendations which would ensure the realization by the year 2000 of the objectives of the Global Strategy; (c) to review and determine the substantive role and contribution of the human settlements sector in the light of the experience gained and of the results of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development; and (d) to review trends in economic and social development as they affect planning and development of human settlements and make recommendations for future action at national and international levels.

69. To facilitate the task of the conference in this respect, documentation would have to be prepared along the lines set out below. A review would be carried out of the policies and programmes undertaken by Governments and by organizations of the United Nations system, together with the results achieved, supplemented by information to be obtained from other intergovernmental organizations, research institutions and non-governmental organizations. This analysis would be complemented by a review of trends in economic and social development as they affect the planning and development of human settlements. This material would be presented in the form of thematic reports, one of which would be devoted to the mid-term review of the implementation of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, and another to the substantive role and contribution of the human settlements sector with regard to the recommendations of the Rio Conference.

70. On the basis of the foregoing, and taking into account the emerging issues discussed in section A above, including, in particular, the sustainable development imperative, a set of rolling programmes and subprogrammes for national and international action would be drawn up for consideration at the conference. The programmes should be built around action areas, each of which should be considered in the light of general concerns and relevant cross-sectoral factors. This list of action areas would seek to address two sets of issues. The first would be issues already identified by the Vancouver Conference, which need rethinking in the light of new challenges and priorities, namely, settlement policies and strategies; settlement planning, development and management; shelter; environmental infrastructure (water supply, sanitation and waste management); and land resources management. The second would be new issues which need full consideration, namely, new technologies, including the impact of the current communications and informatics revolution; energy; transportation; and the sustainable development dimension of human settlements activities.

National settlement policies and strategies

71. Despite decentralization in human settlements planning, development and management, policy and legislative decisions on the part of central Government, with regard to both human settlements as such and broader development issues such as fiscal policy, public sector investment and economic and environmental regulations are still likely to have a major impact

on human settlements. This issue will be analysed in terms of the enabling approach to development, and recommendations will be oriented towards facilitating the efforts of all institutional and non-institutional actors in improving human settlements conditions.

Settlement planning, development and management

72. This area may well become one of the central topics of the conference, in the light of recent developments in thinking and practice and of the fact that the Vancouver Conference had considered this issue primarily from the more limited perspective of traditional physical planning. Planning and development strategies will have to find a coherent dimension in settlements management, which consists in the adaptation to human settlements contexts of the fundamental principles of efficiency, participation and accountability. Approaches will vary according to settlement size, cultural conditions, and levels of resources and economic development, and also according to the location and geographic characteristics of cities, urban systems and regions. In particular, special attention will have to be paid to settlements exposed to natural hazards such as earthquakes, cyclones and floods, to coastal areas, and to countries characterized by unique geographic and environmental situations, such as small island States and mountainous regions.

Shelter

73. On the basis of a review of progress in the implementation of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, constraints will be identified and adjustments and improvements incorporated in the Strategy in order to accelerate progress towards the achievement of its main objective of adequate shelter for all. It would be necessary in this context to consider not only the success on the ground of the enabling approach in mobilizing national shelter efforts but also the impact of new technologies and the sustainable development idea on the use and availability of environment-friendly building materials and construction systems.

Environmental infrastructure (water supply, sanitation and waste management)

74. Identified as an integrated programme area in the human settlements component of Agenda 21, this area is of crucial importance for improving the ability of settlements to attract investment and provide employment opportunities. It is also especially important for the improvement of the living environments of the urban and rural poor, reducing significantly their exposure to the risk of disease related to water and sanitation. In addition to giving renewed impetus to efforts begun in the context of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (1981-1990), it is expected that Habitat II will stimulate new research and new technology in the area. In addition to pilot studies and projects to be carried out during the preparatory phase, it is expected that the conference would give renewed impetus to work in this area, stimulating new research and technology.

Land resources management

75. The effective and sound management of increasingly scarce land resources for human settlements development remains at the forefront of the human settlements agenda, and its importance has been heightened by the emphasis placed by the Rio Conference on a sustainable use of land resources. In addition, the regularization of land tenure conditions, the improvement of cadastral systems and the efficient functioning of land markets remain fundamental prerequisites for access to shelter and for the improvement of shelter and infrastructure in informal and low-income settlements.

Energy for human settlements

76. This area, not considered in depth at Vancouver, has also become a priority subject in view of current environmental concerns and the considerable increase of commercial and non-commercial energy employed for household use and other fundamental settlement functions, such as the transport of people and goods. Considerable research has been undertaken, particularly in the area of non-commercial energy use and in alternative sources of energy to satisfy basic household energy needs, especially in rural areas. The impact of Habitat II should enable this knowledge to be translated into wider use by, inter alia, promoting appropriate policies at the national and local levels.

Transportation

77. This area was also largely overlooked by the Vancouver Conference. Today, transportation accounts for roughly one half of global fossil fuel consumption, and efficient transportation systems, particularly within large urban agglomerations in both developed and developing countries, are a priority for the optimal functioning of all human activities. The conference will be in a position to examine many options available to address this subject.

Cross-sectoral issues

78. While both the review and the preparation of recommendations for action will have to be structured according to a predetermined set of policy issues such as those presented above, the considerations set out in the previous sections of this report show that development options and policies must be seen against a background of broader social and environmental trends, objectives and requirements. It is therefore proposed that each of the action areas outlined above be considered with particular regard to the following factors:

(a) Poverty alleviation: progress achieved up to now, and policies for future action, will have to be assessed and designed in terms of their capacity to improve the living conditions of low-income individuals and groups in all countries and to provide, through human settlements development strategies, increased opportunities for social and economic advancement;

(b) Population issues: population growth and population distribution were topics addressed by the Vancouver Conference, which adopted recommendations to stem the growth of the largest cities and achieve an optimal distribution of population across national territories. Since then, however, it has become clear that urbanization is an irreversible phenomenon closely linked to socio-economic development and growth, while evidence also suggests that the urbanization of population is a powerful factor in the spontaneous reduction of fertility rates and overall population growth rates. In essence, the new agenda for cross-sectoral population issues is to take stock of the urban transition and provide better living conditions for people where they choose to be, rather than deciding where they should be located according to theoretical population distribution models. The discussion of this issue at Habitat II would undoubtedly benefit from the results of the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held in 1994. One other significant population issue that a future conference will have to address is intercountry migration. While recipient countries will have to adopt adequate policies in absorbing these population flows, it is clear that the tide of transnational migration can only be stemmed by providing economic opportunities in the countries where such migration originates; this, in turn, depends on the efficiency of settlements infrastructure as a basis for economic growth and employment;

(c) The urban transition: the "world of cities" in which future generations will live will present unprecedented challenges and opportunities. Human settlements needs will be determined, in both existing cities and urbanizing rural regions, essentially by urban values and inevitably higher standards. At the same time, urban policy and urban management will have to provide a response to the need for reconciling sustained economic growth with better management of renewable and non-renewable resources;

(d) The interest of major groups: the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development explicitly called for real social partnership in support of common efforts for sustainable development. This mandate is in full harmony with the adoption of an enabling approach to human settlements development as the cornerstone of the new global agenda expected to emerge from Habitat II. Such a conference would furnish an ideal opportunity to spell out in detail the enabling mechanisms - starting with information and participation - required to address the needs and utilize the full potential of all social groups: indigenous peoples and their communities, non-governmental organizations, local authorities, workers and their trade unions, business and industry, the scientific and technological community, and other special groups. In particular, the interest and contribution of women will have to be one of the overriding cross-sectoral issues of the proposed conference. Given the fact that women, who, as a group, constitute the greatest untapped resource for human settlements development, are still largely disadvantaged in terms of decisions and opportunities in this area, mobilizing them into full participation in all aspects of the undertaking will be critical to any hope of achieving success in the drive towards sustainable human settlements development.

## IV. PREPARATION AND OTHER MODALITIES FOR THE CONFERENCE

### A. Date and venue

79. In its resolution 46/164, the General Assembly indicated that the conference could take place possibly in 1997. The Assembly may now wish to confirm this date or, if it deems appropriate, in the light of the urgent need to address the problem of deteriorating human settlements conditions worldwide, and bearing in mind the enormous symbolic significance of holding the conference 20 years after the Vancouver Conference, decide on 1996 as a preferable date for Habitat II. Other practical considerations which point to 1996 as a suitable date include the fact that 1996 would fall at the end of the second 4-year phase of the 12-year implementation period of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 (1989-2000) and thus provide a convenient point for undertaking the review of the Strategy provided for in resolution 46/164, and the fact that 1996 would still be early enough for the conference to link its recommendations to the formulation of the medium-term plan for the period beginning in 1998.

80. Under the relevant General Assembly resolutions, the conference would normally be held at Nairobi, as established headquarters of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements. However, on the basis of indications of interest received to this effect from several Governments, it is expected that a Member State or a group of Member States will act as host to the conference, in accordance with the provisions of Assembly resolution 40/243, section I, paragraph 5. The conference could be held at an appropriate date between the months of May and July, in sufficient time for its report to be considered by the General Assembly in the same year.

### B. Institutional arrangements

#### 1. Intergovernmental body

81. An intergovernmental preparatory committee would need to be designated to guide the preparatory work for the conference. Although the option exists, in accordance with paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 35/10 C, should Member States so decide, to use the existing intergovernmental machinery of the Commission on Human Settlements to discharge the functions of the preparatory committee, such an arrangement would not necessarily result in any substantial savings in time and costs, since the Commission would need to devote the full time of its two regular sessions in the period before the conference (1993 and 1995) to its normal agenda and work. More importantly, the preparatory process for Habitat II, being rather different in character and broader in scope than the regular work and concerns of a substantive technical body such as the Commission on Human Settlements, would require a preparatory body with universal membership and which has the possibility to attract the participation not only of States both within and outside the United Nations system, but also of all other interested groups, such as non-governmental organizations, civic and community groups, academic institutions, professional bodies, the business community and others.

82. For these reasons, the General Assembly may wish to establish a separate preparatory committee to prepare for the conference. The Commission on Human Settlements would then, during its regular sessions, be requested to comment on the preparatory work and provide the necessary substantive inputs. Other relevant organizations of the United Nations system, and intergovernmental bodies and non-governmental organizations outside the United Nations system, would be requested to do the same.

83. In order to ensure the widest possible participation of Governments and others in the preparatory process for the conference, appropriate organizational arrangements would have to be made to permit and encourage participation by all States, whether Members of the United Nations or members of the specialized agencies, and by other international organizations, including organizations of the United Nations system, and representatives of city, municipal and local authorities, of non-governmental organizations, industry, professional, business and civic groups, and of community-based organizations and other major groups, as appropriate.

### 2. Secretariat of the conference

84. As is normal for such conferences, provision would have to be made for a secretariat to provide services for the duration of the conference, including both the preparatory and post-conference winding-up periods. In this connection, it is recalled that by virtue of General Assembly resolution 32/162 of 19 December 1977, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) is already the focal point for human settlements action and the coordination of activities within the United Nations system. Furthermore, it is specified in paragraph 3 of Assembly resolution 35/10 C that the secretariats for special conferences should, to the extent possible, be provided by the existing Secretariat machinery with such temporary strengthening as may be required. It would therefore seem appropriate in this case fully to utilize the existing expertise and experience of the Centre in the preparation of the conference, supplemented by modest additional staff and financial resources. This implies that the temporary secretariat for the conference itself would remain relatively small and be organizationally part of the Centre.

## C. Intergovernmental preparatory process

85. The proposed schedule of preparatory sessions for the conference is based on the premise that, where appropriate, advantage will be taken of the programme of meetings of the Commission on Human Settlements to schedule sessions of the preparatory committee.

86. It is proposed that the organizational session of the preparatory committee for the conference should take place in May-June 1993. The duration of such a session should be no more than five working days.

87. It would then be advisable to hold the first substantive preparatory session early in 1994, at a time and venue to be decided, on the basis of the working agenda to be determined at the organizational session. This first substantive preparatory session would devote two working weeks to the consideration of background documentation for the conference.

88. The second substantive session, also over a period of two weeks, would be held early in 1995, at a date or venue to be decided, to review a preliminary set of draft papers and recommendations for the conference.

89. The third substantive session would last two working weeks and would be held early in 1996, to finalize the draft documentation for the conference.

90. In order to save on costs and to achieve maximum effectiveness, regional preparatory meetings could also be held in conjunction with meetings of regional intergovernmental bodies devoted to human settlements issues.

## V. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

91. The financial implications of preparing and convening the conference depend on a number of elements that have yet to be decided by the General Assembly. Owing to the fact that the information on particular modalities for preparation and holding the conference, including its substantive, conference-servicing and public information components, are still not available, it is not possible to provide Member States with precise cost estimates for the conference at this stage. However, on the assumption that the modalities for the conference and the scope and composition of related arrangements would be similar to those approved by the General Assembly for the preparation of the World Conference on Human Rights, to be held in 1993, the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held in 1994, and the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in 1995, it is estimated that the overall costs of the United Nations conference on human settlements (Habitat II) would be in the range of $2-2.5 million for substantive and public information activities and some $3 million for the conference-servicing requirements, spread over the period from 1993 onwards. It should be noted that the costs for the preparation and holding of the three above-mentioned conferences are financed in part from extrabudgetary resources through trust funds established specifically for the purpose. Once the General Assembly decides on timing, venue and modalities of the United Nations conference on human settlements (Habitat II), the programme budget implications of that decision will be submitted to the Assembly in accordance with established procedures.

## Notes

1/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 8 (A/46/8), annex I.

2/ Housing and Economic Adjustment (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.88.IV.1).

3/ See Report of Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Vancouver, 31 May-11 June 1976 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.76.IV.7 and corrigendum), chaps. I and II.

4/ United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), Global Report on Human Settlements (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1987).

5/ United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), A New Agenda for Human Settlements (HS/130/88; Nairobi, 1988).

6/ United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), The Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 (HS/185/90; Nairobi, 1990). See also Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 8, addendum (A/43/8/Add.1).

7/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 48 (A/46/48), vol. II, annex I. For Agenda 21, see Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992 (A/CONF.151/26).

8/ World Commission on Environment and Development, Our Common Future (Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 1987).

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